

## **NEWS**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, Oct. 4, 2004

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

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## **DELAWARE TO DISTRIBUTE POTASSIUM IODIDE IN OCTOBER**

The Delaware Division of Public Health and Delaware Emergency Management Agency will conduct distribution of potassium iodide (KI) tablets in October to Delaware residents who live within 10 miles of the Salem/Hope Creek nuclear power plants.

Tablets will be available to those who did not receive potassium iodide during the initial distribution in 2002. Pharmacists will be available to answer questions at the distribution locations.

The distribution dates and locations are as follows:

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Townsend Fire Co., 107 Main St., Townsend, Del.

Thursday, Oct. 28, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Appoquinimink State Service Center, 120 Silver Lake Rd., Middletown, Del.

Delaware residents of the Emergency Planning Zone, the 10-mile radius around the plant, will also receive a mailed notification listing the distribution location, dates and times.

Potassium iodide (KI) is an over-the-counter medication that can protect the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine, which may be released in the event of a radiation emergency. The tablets were supplied to Delaware through a program initiated by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

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The tablets are offered to all states that have a population within a 10-mile radius of a nuclear power facility.

State health and emergency management officials said the potassium iodide is a supplement to Delaware's existing emergency plans that apply in case of a nuclear incident. Evacuation remains the primary method of protecting Delaware residents; the potassium iodide will offer additional protection.

According to Dr. Jaime Rivera, Director of the Division of Public Health, potassium iodide does not protect against external radiation, but it can help protect the thyroid gland from radioactive iodine that is ingested or inhaled. In the proper dosage and taken at the appropriate time, potassium iodide will effectively saturate the thyroid gland so that radioactive iodine cannot accumulate there. This proper use can protect the gland from acute or delayed effects from exposure to high doses of radioactive iodine.

Jamie Turner, Director of the Delaware Emergency Management Agency said, in the event of a radiation emergency, state and local officials will inform the public through use of the Emergency Alert System (EAS) radio stations. Information will include directions to evacuation routes and emergency registration facilities and instructions on when to take the potassium iodide pills.

All Delaware residents who live within ten miles of the New Jersey nuclear facilities operated by PSEG Nuclear LLC are eligible for the free potassium iodide tablets. They are asked to assist in the distribution efforts by following the guidelines included in the informational mailing.

Those eligible for potassium iodide are asked to bring the informational flyer they received in the mail, photo identification, such as a driver's license, and an additional proof of residency, such as a utility bill.

After the scheduled distribution dates, new residents, or others within the 10-mile Emergency Planning Zone who did not obtain tablets, should contact their local pharmacist for information regarding potassium iodide. Persons residing outside of the ten-mile radius of Salem/ Hope Creek nuclear power plants who want to keep a supply of potassium iodide tablets may also contact their local pharmacist.

For additional information regarding the potassium iodide distribution program in Delaware, call the Division of Public Health, 302-744-4546 or the Delaware Emergency Management Agency at 302-659-3362.

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